

REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND
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April 5, 2022

Support the 988 Implementation Act (H.R. 7116)

Too many people experiencing suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress do not receive the support and care they need when they need it. The need to provide 24/7, free and confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress has become increasingly clear. In 2020, the federal government enacted the National Suicide Hotline Act, which established 9-8-8 as the national number for suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotlines to address this need. Additionally, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) unanimously voted to expand access to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by allowing text messages sent to 9-8-8 to be routed to the Lifeline. Beginning on July 16, 2022, 9-8-8 will go live as the new national, three-digit phone number for Americans in crisis to access suicide prevention services and mental health counselors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Counties are an integral part of the local behavioral health crisis care continuum and will be key facilitators of the implementation of the new 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. In order for 9-8-8 to be successful, individuals in crisis need to have someone to call, someone to come, and somewhere to go. This means that counties

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need to expand the capacity of the 9-8-8 call center infrastructure to field and triage incoming calls (someone to call); enhance services being provided to those in need, including mobile crisis response services and over-the-phone crisis services (someone to come); and build up bed and crisis stabilization capacity across the spectrum of needs (somewhere to go).

Under the leadership of the Board of Supervisors, Los Angeles County is currently enhancing and expanding its call center capacity and crisis response services to prepare for the upcoming launch of 9-8-8. But ongoing financial support for this effort will be key, which is why U.S. Representative Tony Cardenas, D-CA introduced the “988 Implementation Act” (Act) [H.R. 7116] that will provide federal funding and guidance for states to build up their crisis response infrastructure in order to successfully implement 9-8-8. Specifically, the bill will solidify ongoing federal funding for call centers, mobile crisis teams, and crisis centers; support workforce development; require health insurance plans to cover crisis services; implement a national suicide prevention awareness campaign; and provide technical assistance and support for states as they implement their programs. This bill will provide much needed assistance to Los Angeles County as we prepare for the launch of 9-8-8 this summer.

There are urgent realities driving the need for crisis service transformation across our country. Studies have shown that suicide significantly impacts at-risk communities, including youth, the Black and LGBTQ+ communities, veterans, and those with hearing, visual, or speech disabilities. In 2020 alone, the U.S. had one death by suicide about every 11 minutes—and for people aged 10 – 34 years, suicide is a leading cause of death. The new 988 system provides an effective, appropriate, and sustainable response to help thousands of people overcome crisis situations every day. The full vision of a transformed crisis care system with 988 at its core will not be built overnight. Transformation of this

scale will take time, and we must all work together to make it happen.

WE, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office to send a 5-signature letter in support of the 988 Implementation Act [H.R. 7116] to the U.S. Representative Tony Cárdenas (D-CA), with a copy to the co-authors of the bill, U.S. Representatives Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Doris Matsui (D-CA), Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Seth Moulton (D-MA), Grace Napolitano (D-CA) and Don Beyer (D-VA), the County's Congressional Delegation, and U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Alex Padilla; and direct the Los Angeles County's legislative advocates in Washington D.C. to support H.R. 7116 and similar measures .

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